



# **Bridges Community Centre**

## **POVA**

### **Policy and Procedures**

**February 2012**

Based on All Wales Policy and Procedures for the protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse.

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## 1. Introduction.

This policy is based on a summary version of the *All Wales Policy and Procedures for the Protection of vulnerable Adults from Abuse*. This document is intended to guide the safeguarding work of all those concerned with the welfare of vulnerable adults employed in the Voluntary sector.

## 2. Values.

The values and rights below underpin the way vulnerable adults should be supported and cared for in whatever settings or places they live in or use:

- **Independence:** to think, act and make decisions, even when this involves a level of risk.
- **Dignity:** recognition that everyone is unique, with intrinsic value as a person.
- **Respect:** for a person's needs wishes, preferences, language, race religion and culture.
- **Equality:** the right of people to be treated no less favourably than others because of their age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, class, culture, language, race, ethnic origin or other relevant distinctions.
- **Privacy:** the right of the individual to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention in their affairs.
- **Choice:** the right to make choices, and to have the alternatives and information that enable choices to be made.

### ***Putting principles and values into place.***

- **Adult protection is everyone's concern.**
- All staff, and volunteers should understand the nature of abuse, how people might be at risk of harm and work to prevent it.
- When responding to referrals, the concern raised **must** be believed/ accepted without judgement.
- Staff and volunteers have a duty to report any concerns they have about the potential abuse of a vulnerable adult.
- Careful consideration and respect of vulnerable adults' wishes and preferences are essential to the adult protection process.

- Vulnerable adults with the capacity to understand abuse and risk of abuse have the right to refuse intervention even if this leaves them at risk of significant harm (e.g. somebody who may experience domestic violence but doesn't want to report their loved one/ partner), but those working in adult protection, may need to act to protect other vulnerable adults (e.g. an elderly mother who is living with them) from the same abuser.
- Vulnerable adults are entitled to the protection of the law and full access to all parts of the criminal justice system, in the same way as any other citizen.
- Vulnerable adults who are allegedly victims of abuse should have the highest priority for protection, assessment and support.
- Vulnerable adults have the right to full and timely information about their rights, services, what is being done on their behalf and why. This can be summarised as; nothing about us without us.
- Carers have the right to have their needs taken into account.
- Alleged perpetrators, including those who are carers, must have their rights taken into consideration.
- Alleged perpetrators who are also vulnerable adults have the right to be supported and to have an independent advocate if they wish.
- Staff, volunteers and managers in Bridges must work actively and proactively with each other, with other agencies, and with the vulnerable adult and their family or carers, to ensure protection and prevention.
- Bridges makes a commitment to work actively to ensure the Wales Adult Protection Policy and Procedures are integral to working practices and staff and volunteers' training.

### **3. Definitions**

#### **(a) Vulnerable Adult**

The Welsh Government's guidance 'In Safe Hands 2000' specifies that:

*"A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 years of age who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or*

*herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation”*

This also includes people who have a physical, mental or learning disability or who may lack the capacity to make specific decisions about their own wellbeing and treatment

## **(b) Abuse**

Abuse is defined as :

*“A violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons which results in significant harm”*

(‘In Safe Hands 2000’)

Abuse may be:

- A single or repeated act,
- Multiple forms of abuse.
- An act of neglect
- A lack of appropriate action.
- An act of omission (failing to act) or neglect.
- The unintended consequences of a person’s actions.

Abuse can occur in any relationship and fundamentally in an abuse of trust, including failure to meet a duty of care.

## **4. Categories of Abuse.**

There are many ways in which a vulnerable person may be abused. It is not unusual for an abused adult to suffer more than one kind of abuse. Accordingly, the impact of abuse and its seriousness for the individual must be evaluated in every case.

There are five main categories of abuse

- Physical e.g. hitting, unreasonable physical restraint, hair pulling
- Sexual e.g. rape, actual or threatened sexual assault, inappropriate use of explicit sexual language which causes offence.
- Financial e.g. theft, misuse of money including state benefits, blocking access to assets

- Emotional or psychological verbal assault e.g. shouting, screaming, humiliation.
- Neglect/ acts of omission e.g. failure to assist in personal hygiene or the provision of food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from health and safety hazards, restricting or preventing social contact with friends or relatives.

### **(a) Other forms of abuse**

More information with typical examples of each kind of neglect and indicators to look for can be found in the All Wales summary document and Annex C.

Other possible forms of abuse include:

- Self-neglect.
- Institutional abuse.
- Discrimination and hate crime.
- Abuse by a stranger.
- Domestic abuse.

When determining the categories of abuse that apply, the impact on the victim is the primary consideration, not whether or not the abuse is intentional, reckless or wilful.

## **5. Action by Bridges staff and volunteers.**

### **(a) Alert**

An alert refers to a concern, disclosure or suspicion that a vulnerable adult is being abused.

Consideration must be given to the perceived level of risk to the vulnerable adult and others and appropriate emergency action taken if necessary.

A *Concern* may be a suspicion or allegation of abuse. A concern may be what a person saw, heard or was told. The referrer does not need evidence of abuse. The expectation of this policy of anyone suspecting

abuse is if **in doubt report**. A *disclosure* is information about possible abuse received from a vulnerable adult or someone else on their behalf.

### **If the Vulnerable adult does not want the alert disclosed**

If the vulnerable adult does not want a member of staff or a volunteer to disclose, nevertheless staff and volunteers have an overriding duty to report to their manager but must also tell the vulnerable adult that they are doing so.

### **Role of the person raising the alert**

#### **Where alerts are referred:**

Alerts should be referred to Social services or to the police if a crime is suspected.

#### **Action on alert:**

Staff and volunteers must not delay reporting an alert. If their line manager is not available they must contact another manager or trustee in Bridges or contact Social Services or the police themselves if the situation calls for it.

#### **Immediate Action:**

Abuse may present itself as an acute situation demanding immediate action. A vulnerable adult may be in immediate physical danger or need urgent medical attention, or be suicidal. In this case, contact the police directly using a 999 call.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **What to do if someone discloses to you or you discover abuse**

- You must ensure the care and safety of the alleged victim
- Do not promise to keep the information secret
- Listen carefully to the account without interrogating the Vulnerable Adult – only clarify the facts
- Note persons, places, and times referred to in the account given
- Write down as soon as possible exactly what the person said then sign and date it.
- Preserve any physical evidence
- If the perpetrator is also a Vulnerable Adult equal consideration will need to be given to their needs.

- Contact your manager who will inform the appropriate authority. If s/he is not available then contact Social Services Duty Desk

***It is essential to be sensitive as in cases of possible sexual abuse or situations where there is a danger of exposing the person to further immediate risk of abuse or injury.***

**What to do when an incident does not appear to require emergency procedure or there is insubstantial evidence of abuse or neglect.**

- Employees and volunteers should be sensitive to cultural, racial and other factors affecting families.
- Employees or volunteers observing any indicators of abuse should initially and sensitively seek an explanation. If the families are uncooperative the Volunteer should advise them that the manager will be informed.
- The manager should check out the volunteer's report tactfully with the individuals concerned. They should explain to the carer that any unsatisfactory explanation of the vulnerable adult's condition may be discussed with other professionals.
- Employees or volunteers uneasy about any explanation or noticing re-occurrence should share their concern with their manager. Unstable or changed situations should also be reported. Concerns should be recorded.
- If a vulnerable adult begins to disclose information about abuse, employees or volunteers should listen carefully without prompting or probing but having first explained the limitations imposed by the law and the Bridges confidentiality policy. The exact words should be recorded as soon as possible. ***It is not the role of employees or volunteers to investigate allegations or diagnose abuse.***
- Written records should be simple and factual. They should be written in ink within 24 hours, dated, signed and held confidentially and securely. Actions taken by employees or volunteers should also be recorded.
- If the manager finds cause for concern, s/he will contact the appropriate officer at Social Services or the police.

**(b)The Adult protection referral.**

A referral is the direct reporting of an allegation, concern or disclosure to a statutory organization (social services, police or health). It is a concern that is formally recorded on an adult



protection referral form – this is the start of the formal adult protection process.

**A referral should be made as soon as possible and in any case within one working day of the alert.**

The referral must highlight the perceived level; of risk to the vulnerable adult and others. The form should be completed as you are able with all details you are aware of included. Do not delay sending the referral form if you are unsure of anything e.g. age of person or details of GP.

## **6. Responsibilities.**

### **(a) Designated lead officers:**

The Centre Director is responsible for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. However the Befriending project manager and the Coordinator of Monmouth Social Circle can also be contacted for information and advice on issues regarding Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

## Stages and Timescales.

Stage	Activity	Timescale
<b>Stage 1</b> Initial alert (abuse alleged, disclosed, suspected)	Evaluate risk.  Make a decision  Take action  Make referral	<b>Take immediate/emergency            action if necessary.</b>  Referral to be completed within one working day.
<b>Stage 2</b>  Referral received	Referral received by social services, police, CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales), or health.  Evaluate risk.	
<b>Stage 3</b>  Initial evaluation	Decide if the adult Protection procedures apply.	Initial evaluation on the day the referral is received

<p><b>Stage 4</b></p> <p>Strategy Discussion</p>	<p>Initial information gathering.</p> <p>Evaluate all risks</p> <p>Create and implement individual or general protection plans if risk identified.</p> <p><i>Police will decide if a criminal investigation is required.</i></p>	<p>Hold a discussion within two working days of alert.</p>
<p><b>Stage 5</b></p> <p>Strategy meeting</p>	<p>Evaluate risk and, in the context of risk assessment, decide if investigation needed or alternative action.</p> <p>Create and implement individual or general protection plans if risk is identified.</p>	<p>Within seven working days of the alert.</p>
<p><b>Stage 6</b></p> <p>Investigation</p>	<p>Investigation conducted, including further evaluation of risk.</p>	<p>Completed as soon as possible and within timescale agreed at strategy meeting.</p>
<p><b>Stage 7</b></p> <p>Further &amp; Final strategy meeting</p>	<p>Receive investigation report, agree actions,</p> <p>Review risk and formulate individual and general protection plan whenever</p>	<p>Within seven working days of completion of the investigation report.</p>

	necessary	
<b>Stage 8</b> Case conference	Feedback to alleged victim/advocate/family. Agree protection plan. Evaluate risk.	Within one week of final strategy meeting.

<b>Stage 9</b> Reviews	Reviews of individual protection plans and risk	Within six weeks of agreement of individual Protection Plan and thereafter as agreed.
<b>Stage 10</b> Closure	Adult protection work completed and adult protection file closed. Care management continues as necessary.	Once all risks resolved or agreement reached on the management of any continuing risks.
<b>NB: Working days exclude weekends and bank holidays</b>		

**Annex A: Safeguarding Contacts at Bridges.**

**Mark Walton – Centre Director.**

**Miranda Thomason – Community Connections befriending project  
Manager**